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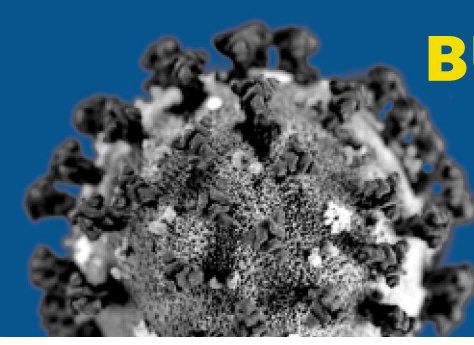
PHILIPPINE DAILY
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS
INQUIRER



LIFESTYLE
BUSTING 10 COVID-19 MYTHS
C1

PH BARRING FOREIGNERS; DFA SAYS NO EXCEPTIONS

STORY BY DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN

In a series of Twitter posts, Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. says visitors with visa-free privileges will also be barred from entering the country and that the move is intended to impose a 'total ban' on foreigners until April 12. A2

DOH REPORTS 15 MORE VIRUS CASES

NEWS / A3

SMART DRONE IN VIRUS FIGHT The Pasig City government has purchased three smart drones—one of them shown here—designed to spray disinfectant over large areas in one pass. They will be used in "every street, big or small" as part of the battle to contain the spread of the coronavirus, according to Mayor Vico Sotto. —RICHARD A. REYES

CHECK FOR FAKES

FDA APPROVES 4 COVID-19 TESTING KITS

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Thursday said it had approved the first four test kits to detect contagion from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the pneumonia-like disease COVID-19, which has killed at least 17 people in the country.

"These are PCR (polymerase chain reaction)-based reagent kits used in laboratories and not point-of-care or do-it-yourself kits," the FDA said in a statement.

The initial list of approved kits would be regularly updated, according to the agency's director general, Eric Domingo.

The FDA is under the Department of Health (DOH).

The approved COVID-19 test kits for commercial use are:

•Nucleic acid detection kit, manufactured by Shanghai GenoeDx Biotech Co. Ltd.-Shanghai, China. It is distributed by S&S Enterprise.

•Novel coronavirus 2019 nucleic acid detection kit (fluorescence PCR method), manufactured by Beijing Applied Biological Technologies Co. Ltd. It is distributed by Sahar International. A4

NEWS / A4

BIR EXTENDS TAX DEADLINE TO MAY 15, DELAYING COLLECTION OF ₱145B

BUSINESS / B6

BIZ BUZZ: A TRILLION CONSEQUENCES

OPINION / A13

LENT AND QUARANTINE

LET THEM EAT BREAD!

French hoarding baguettes in lockdown

PARIS—As anxious consumers around the world stockpile toilet paper and pasta, the French are thronging bakeries for baguettes, fearing a shortage of their daily bread as they wait out the coronavirus epidemic in confinement.

The country of 67 million people consumes nine billion of the long loaves every year, has an annual competition for the best baguette in Paris, and a special word for the pointy end they chew off on their way home from the baker after work: the crouton.

Bakers are among the few essential-service businesses allowed to stay open in France A9

NEWS

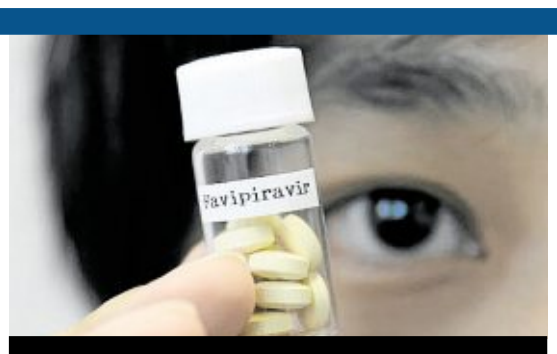
Senators propose quarantine aid

Several senators proposed on Thursday a special session to provide a supplemental budget to deal with a possible public order and financial crisis arising from the monthlong quarantine of Luzon that President Duterte imposed to halt the spread of the new coronavirus in the country. Senate President Vicente Sotto III said the supplemental budget could amount from P50 billion to P100 billion. —STORY BY LEILA B. SALAVERRIA A4

REGIONS

Distancing? But how in Taal folk shelters?

Hundreds of families displaced by Taal Volcano's eruption in January remain packed in evacuation centers in Batangas province, making it impossible to enforce social distancing, a strategy for preventing the spread of the new coronavirus. Moreover, the evacuees fear they would run out of food as the flow of relief goods to the evacuation centers has been stalled by the Luzon-wide lockdown. —STORY BY MARICAR CINCO A6



WORLD

Japan's bid for cure most promising

While the World Health Organization has repeatedly said there is still no known cure for the new coronavirus disease plaguing the world, scientists all over the world are racing to conduct clinical trials on drugs that may stop the virus. In Wuhan, China, where the disease emerged last December, experts have conducted trials on three drugs and they are betting on Japan's favipiravir as the most promising. —STORY BY REUTERS, CGTN A10

METRO

Hotels offer free rooms to front-liners

Several hotels in Manila have offered the free use of more than 600 rooms to medical workers assigned to public hospitals in the city for the duration of the Luzon-wide quarantine."[I have] directed the Manila Health Department and city hospital directors to take note and submit [a] list of our doctors, nurses [and] health workers in the city government who live outside Manila," Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso said. —STORY BY NIKKA G. VALENZUELA A8